DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 897 JC 020 099

TITLE	Student Outcomes Assessment 1995-96: A Progress Report to the Virginia Community College System.
INSTITUTION	Germanna Community Coll., Locust Grove, VA.
PUB DATE	2002-01-10
NOTE	30p.; For the 2000-01 assessment, see JC 020 101.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Basic Writing; College Outcomes Assessment; *College Transfer Students; Community Colleges; *Developmental Studies Programs; Enrollment; *Remedial Programs; *Transfer Rates (College); Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Germanna Community College VA; Virginia Community College System

ABSTRACT

This annual report summarizes progress on two aspects of Germanna Community College's (Virginia) Student Outcomes Assessment program: developmental education and transfer student success. The analysis of developmental education shows that a substantial proportion of students benefit from developmental coursework in writing and basic math. High school graduates enroll in developmental courses at rates similar to the student body as a whole. Students who are identified for developmental courses and take them are more likely to complete collegiate courses. However, the analysis indicates that there are unresolved issues, focusing primarily on the placement process. Analysis of transfer student success shows that overall, from 1990-1996, 76% of students who applied were accepted for admission to the 10 public colleges and universities that provided data. More than half of the students who applied were enrolled, and approximately 80% of those who enrolled completed their first year at the transfer institution in good academic standing. Those students who had graduated from Germanna before applying for transfer were even more likely to be successful. The analysis, however, finds that many students applying for admission to senior colleges did not complete Germanna degrees, and many were not enrolled in designated transfer programs. (KP)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 459 897

Germanna Community College

Student Outcomes Assessment 1995-96

A Progress Report to the

Virginia Community College System

John W. Curtis

Director of Research and Planning

January 10, 2002

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H. W. Ward

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

TM030099

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Section I.
Executive Summary

This annual report to the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) summarizes progress on two aspects of Germanna Community College's Student Outcomes Assessment program: developmental education and transfer student success. It also includes information on a special topic requested by the VCCS, developmental enrollment by high school graduates. These sections are drawn from the complete report *Student Outcomes Assessment Program, 1995-96*, currently being compiled. The Germanna outcomes assessment program provides relevant data as part of the College's comprehensive program of institutional effectiveness assessment, evaluation, and planning. The 1995-96 and 1996-97 academic years represent a new milestone in the implementation of this program, led to a large degree by the student outcomes assessment process.

The analysis of developmental education in Section II documents that a substantial proportion of Germanna's students can and do benefit from developmental coursework in writing and basic math. Students who are identified for developmental courses and take them are more likely to complete collegiate courses. However, the analysis indicates also that there are unresolved issues, focusing primarily on the placement process. As part of ongoing review in the College's institutional effectiveness process, the data provided here have stimulated further exploration of the effectiveness of this vital aspect of the College's open-door educational mission.

Section III presents a much more complete analysis of transfer student success than has been available in past years. Overall, between 1990 and 1996, 76% of the Germanna students who applied were accepted for admission to the ten public senior colleges and universities which provided data. More than half of the students who applied were enrolled, and approximately 80% of those who did enroll completed their first year at the transfer institution in good standing academically. Those students who had graduated from Germanna before applying for transfer were even more likely to be successful. Clearly, Germanna provides an educational program which allows substantial numbers of students to pursue further education and opportunities. The analysis also documents, however, that many of the students applying for admission to senior colleges did not complete Germanna degrees, and many of them were not enrolled in designated

"transfer" programs while at Germanna. This assessment has spurred a re-examination of Germanna's role in meeting the needs of these students, which will comprise a primary emphasis for assessment during 1996-97.

Finally, Section IV addresses the special topic requested by the VCCS, developmental enrollment by high school graduates. The analysis indicates that high school graduates enroll in developmental courses at rates similar to the student body as a whole, with variations according to high school of origin and program pursued at Germanna. Presentation and examination of this data will be integrated into GCC's already expanding collaboration with area high schools.

Section II.
Developmental Education

A. Findings

This section presents the results of an analysis of placement and developmental coursework at Germanna between 1993 and 1996. Data for this analysis were obtained through the VCCS Research and Assessment Data Support System (RADSS). The analysis will describe the overall context for developmental coursework, as part of a comprehensive program of transfer, occupational, and general interest courses; identify the patterns of student placement into developmental courses, and their actual enrollment in those courses; and will track students from developmental courses into collegiate coursework, comparing their success in those classes with students who have not enrolled in developmental courses. The related "Special Topic" analysis, regarding the enrollment of high school graduates in developmental coursework, is presented in Section IV.

The context for developmental coursework

While the following analysis will document that a substantial proportion of Germanna's students are recommended for and enroll in developmental courses, Table 2.1 shows that such courses are only a small part of the overall instructional program of the College. During the last three academic years, developmental enrollment has comprised only 6% of total course registrations for credit. Although developmental courses are an important aspect of the comprehensive "open-door" services Germanna provides, the resources utilized in their provision are relatively small.

Table 2.1
Registrations by level of course, 1993-96

	Course Level								
Academic Year	**Developmental**		**Certificate**		**100-level**		**200-level**		**Total**
1993-94	930	6.3%	0	0.0%	9,693	65.8%	4,097	27.8%	14,720
1994-95	725	5.1%	84	0.6%	9,517	66.6%	3,968	27.8%	14,294
1995-96	770	5.3%	74	0.5%	9,886	68.4%	3,728	25.8%	14,458
Total	2,425	5.6%	158	0.4%	29,096	66.9%	11,793	27.1%	43,472

Like the other Virginia community colleges, Germanna's educational programs are available to all who may benefit from them--regardless of prior academic preparation. As a consequence of

this policy, many of the students who enter Germanna are not academically prepared for collegiate coursework. They may have pursued a "vocational" program in high school, with or without the benefit of a Tech Prep college-oriented curriculum; they may have attended high school many years ago, or not at all; or they may have decided only later in their lives to attempt a postsecondary education. Other students are enrolling in order to improve their job-related skills after some time in the workplace, or in order to move up in a changing labor market. For all these students, developmental coursework provides an opportunity to refresh unused skills, or to fill gaps in previous academic preparation. Developmental courses prepare students for success in collegiate coursework.

Identification of students for developmental coursework

Germanna identifies student needs for developmental coursework in two primary skill areas: written English expression and mathematics. These skills contribute to success in virtually all college-level curriculum areas. As Table 2.2 shows, on the basis of placement testing and a review of the student's educational background and aspirations, the majority of new students are identified as requiring developmental coursework to enhance their chances of success.

Table 2.2
Proportion of students identified for developmental courses

	New Students		Continuing Students	
	Full-time	**Part-time**	**Full-time**	**Part-time**
Fall 1993	68.0%	36.2%	60.4%	47.2%
Spring 1994	55.3%	34.8%	63.4%	45.0%
Fall 1994	59.6%	31.3%	69.1%	51.6%
Spring 1995	53.5%	27.6%	61.9%	46.0%
Fall 1995	62.0%	29.5%	60.6%	52.3%
Spring 1996	58.9%	33.1%	57.7%	42.2%

The table indicates that consistently 50-60% of new full-time students are identified as requiring developmental coursework of some kind. Despite some fluctuations, the proportion has not declined in the last three years. The largest number of these students need strengthening in mathematics. Less part-time students are identified for developmental courses, although they may simply not be required to undergo formal placement testing and advising.

Enrollment in developmental courses

Although a majority of students are identified for developmental coursework, not all students actually enroll in those courses. Students who do not intend to complete a degree at Germanna are not always required to complete basic math or English classes, for which they would have to complete placement testing. Students also may delay taking developmental classes, viewing these as time and/or money "lost" in terms of program completion or skill development. Table 2.3 documents the proportion of students identified for developmental coursework who actually enroll in those classes.

Table 2.3
Students identified for and enrolling in developmental courses

	Developmental Required		Developmental Not Required	
	Have Enrolled	Have Not Enrolled	Have Enrolled	Have Not Enrolled
Fall 1993	60.4%	39.6%	6.0%	94.0%
Spring 1994	53.2%	46.8%	5.7%	94.3%
Fall 1994	56.3%	43.7%	8.9%	91.1%
Spring 1995	48.0%	52.0%	6.1%	93.9%
Fall 1995	50.5%	49.5%	6.1%	93.9%
Spring 1996	42.5%	57.5%	4.5%	95.5%

This table combines all students and all types of developmental coursework. Roughly 40-50% of the students identified as potentially benefiting from developmental courses have not enrolled in *any* such courses. Here it must be noted that the placement in developmental courses remains essentially a *recommendation*. Although entry-level courses in English and math have placement prerequisites, it is not always possible to enforce these completely. Placement may also be erroneous, and it is not clear at this point whether SIS records are updated for changes in developmental status after the initial placement.

Developmental courses and success in collegiate courses

Student outcomes in two entry-level collegiate courses were examined to determine the effect of developmental coursework on success. The two courses examined for this period were

ENG 111 "College Composition I" and MTH 120 "Introduction to Mathematics". Both courses were analyzed using the TKNRL20 program and other data from RADSS.

For the analysis of success in collegiate writing, students were tracked from ENG 01 "Preparing for College Writing" to ENG 111. Students who passed ENG 01 (receiving a grade of "S") earned an average of 2.43 grade points in ENG 111--approximately a C+. This compares with an average of 2.67 grade points for all students enrolled in ENG 111. Some 72% of the developmental students received a C or better in ENG 111, whereas 76% of all students received at least a C. The difference is slight and not statistically significant. In sum, students who completed the developmental course successfully were successful in completing the collegiate course as well.

Students enrolled in MTH 120 were tracked from the developmental MTH 03 "Basic Algebra" course using the same procedure. Impressively, the students who passed MTH 03 scored an average of 2.95 grade points in MTH 120, compared with an overall average of 2.68 for the course. Eighty-seven percent of the developmental students earned at least a C in MTH 120, although only 74% did overall. Students who prepared themselves through the developmental course actually fared better in the collegiate course.

Further analysis gives additional evidence that developmental courses assist students in completing collegiate courses successfully. Table 2.3 above indicated that a substantial proportion of students placed in developmental courses do not actually enroll in those courses. Of students identified for developmental English who took the developmental course, 81% passed ENG 111 with at least a C. This compares with 67% of the developmental students who did not take the developmental course. The difference is substantial, yet at the same time this number indicates the possibility of a number of "false positive" placements among these students--those who were identified as needing assistance, but passed the course without it.

In MTH 120, the differences are somewhat clearer. Seventy-three percent of the students who took required developmental courses received at least a C for MTH 120, while only 46% of those who did not take the required developmental course were able to earn a C. The developmental course provides a clear benefit, with fewer possible "false positives".

Summary of findings

In an open-door environment, placing students in the most appropriate courses and providing developmental assistance where needed are critical processes for enhancing students' chances for success. This analysis indicates that a substantial proportion of Germanna's students can benefit from developmental assistance in writing and basic math. Students who are identified for developmental courses and take them are more likely to complete collegiate courses. At the same time, this analysis and consequent focus group discussions at the College indicate that a review of the accuracy of placement is required. Students often view developmental courses as a hindrance to their progress, and the benefit of such courses can only be made clearer through appropriate placement.

B. The Use of Developmental Education Assessment

Placement and developmental instruction have undergone continuing review at Germanna, although this analysis represents a first step in the integration of more comprehensive quantitative analysis of student success into that review process. During 1995-96 and 1996-97, a comprehensive process of institutional effectiveness assessment, evaluation, and planning is being implemented. Although the developmental education program suffers from the lack of a clearly identifiable "home", the institutional effectiveness process and this analysis have already stimulated a renewed interest in improving our ability to "meet students where they are" and provide expanded opportunities for them to succeed.

For the last several years, most students have been required to present either placement test scores or scores from the SAT or ACT in order to document their readiness for collegiate courses. Minimum threshold levels have been established for writing and math courses, and these thresholds have been adjusted based on the experience of faculty members. Placement test scores are available for advising as part of basic SIS screens, accessible to most (if not all) faculty.

Germanna now utilizes the computer-adaptive COMPASS placement tests, providing extra flexibility in testing students. In addition, during 1995-96 a pilot project was conducted to assess the use of the WorkKeys skill-based testing system, developed by ACT, as a supplemental tool for assessing the preparation of students in occupational curricula. The pilot project is being continued into 1996-97, in order to provide comparisons with the initial results.

Discussion of the process of placement and developmental coursework has been ongoing among the faculty and with counselors and staff from Student Development Services. Processes for testing and advising were reviewed and revised most recently in Spring 1996, and will be evaluated during the coming year. The addition of a significant quantity of specific data through this analysis has already spurred renewed discussion about the validity of the placement process, which will undoubtedly lead to additional assessment projects. A cycle of continuous assessment, evaluation, and planning is in evidence for the first time.

C. Problems in Developmental Education Assessment

As in other areas, the assessment of developmental education at Germanna had been hampered in previous years due to a lack of concrete analytical results. The present report represents a departure from this past difficulty, although there clearly remains much to be done. The placement and support of students is at once the most critical and the most complex aspect of a comprehensive community college's activities.

The most significant issue identified by faculty members and counselors participating in the focus group discussion of these assessment results was the validity of the current placement testing procedure. It was noted that:

- Students may not be well-informed of the importance of placement testing, or of their option for re-testing. We are presently advising more students, and offering them more options, without a consequent increase in staff or facilities.
- The current math placement test is oriented toward a college preparatory background, and may not be appropriate for all students; WorkKeys tests may be an alternative.
- Many students would benefit from some sort of a brief refresher in math before taking the placement exam, as they may have been away from the classroom for some time.
- Students enrolled in developmental writing and math classes usually complete diagnostic tests at the beginning of those courses, which may result in the placement of students in a collegiate course. It is not clear whether these revised placements are recorded in the SIS database.

As a consequence, assessment for 1996-97 will focus on the placement process in more detail, rather than primarily on tracking students as they move into collegiate-level courses.

D. Exemplary Processes in Developmental Education Assessment

Although the present analysis is much improved over those presented in past years, it is likely not accurately categorized as exemplary. However, the present analysis does indicate the

importance of investigating the details of the entire placement and developmental process, rather than focusing solely on success in college-level courses.

E. Progress in Assessing Developmental Education

For the first time, this analysis presents substantial data tracking students through placement, developmental coursework, and college-level classes. At the same time, this analysis raises even more questions, as all good assessment will. The key to making the assessment relevant is the dissemination of results, and a focus on the teaching and learning process in considering their implications. This is the process in which Germanna is now involved, and it represents significant progress--even while much remains to be done.

Section III.
Assessment of Transfer Student Success

A. Findings

This section reports on an analysis of transfer student outcomes, updated and expanded from the analysis presented in Germanna's 1994 Student Outcomes Assessment Report. The basis for this analysis is data on 851 Germanna students who applied for transfer admission at ten of Virginia's public senior colleges and universities between 1990 and 1996. These senior institutions provided student identifiable data files in accordance with the *State Policy on Transfer* enacted in 1991. The data they provided was matched with information on the transfer applicants' attendance at Germanna, available through the RADSS and SIS databases. This section will describe the students who applied for transfer, their success in gaining admission to the senior institutions, and their academic standing one year after enrolling there.

Table 3.1 presents a descriptive summary of the transfer applicants:

Table 3.1
Descriptive characteristics of transfer applicants, 1990-96

Transfer School		
College of William and Mary	9	1.1%
Christopher Newport University	9	1.1%
Clinch Valley College*	5	0.6%
George Mason University*	88	10.3%
James Madison University*	46	5.4%
Mary Washington College*	273	32.1%
Old Dominion University	119	14.0%
Radford University	44	5.2%
Virginia Commonwealth University	165	19.4%
Virginia Tech (VPISU)	93	10.9%
All transfer applicants	851	100.0%

**Note*: Clinch Valley College and James Madison University did not provide data on non-enrollees; Mary Washington College did not provide individually-identifiable data for non-enrollees, but did provide numbers of non-enrollees for 1993-96; George Mason University provided data only for 1991-94.

Table 3.1 (Cont.)
Descriptive characteristics of transfer applicants, 1990-96

Race/Ethnicity		
White	717	90.5%
African-American	49	6.2%
Asian	14	1.8%
Hispanic	5	0.6%
Other	7	0.9%
	792	100.0%
Female	471	59.5%
Male	321	40.5%
	792	100.0%
GCC Graduate	326	41.2%
GCC Non-Graduate	466	58.8%
	792	100.0%
GCC Program		
Transfer	468	59.1%
Occupational	114	14.4%
Unclassified	210	36.4%
	792	100.0%

The table indicates that the primary transfer destinations for Germanna students are Mary Washington College, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and Old Dominion University. Mary Washington College is located in Fredericksburg, part of the Germanna service region, and has long been the primary transfer destination for GCC leavers. VCU is a significant destination for Germanna students interested in training in allied health fields. Old Dominion University also offers health-related programs, and has recently enrolled increasing numbers of students through the Teletechnet program on Germanna's campus. Two other universities, George Mason and Virginia Tech, both receive relatively large numbers of Germanna applicants as well, but fewer students actually enroll at these institutions.

The table also indicates that female and minority students are somewhat underrepresented among the transfer applicants. Only 9.5% of the applicants during this period were non-white, a proportion slightly smaller than Germanna's overall minority student population. The small number of minority student transfers limits the quantitative analysis which is possible in this section. Although female students formed the majority of transfer applicants, their proportion here is less than the overall proportion of the student body, approximately 75% during this period.

Finally, the table shows that the majority of the students did not graduate from Germanna before applying for transfer to a senior institution. This factor must be considered throughout the analysis, since most of Germanna's transfer programs and support services are oriented toward degree completion. Further, the final rows of the table make clear that many of the students who apply for transfer admission at senior colleges were not enrolled in designated "transfer" programs. Some 14% were enrolled at Germanna in occupational programs, but many had not even declared a degree curriculum while attending GCC. Although advising services are available to all students, it is clear that not all take advantage of them. In addition, many of the students "stop out" of higher education for a time between their attendance at Germanna and their application to a transfer institution. Their decision to attend a baccalaureate institution may have come *after* their Germanna courses. The preparation for transfer these students have received at Germanna may thus be uneven, and there are important implications for the services which the College offers them. The tables which follow will reflect differences in outcomes among students who have taken different paths toward transfer.

Transfer Admissions

Table 3.2 shows the acceptance rates for Germanna students applying for admission to senior institutions as transfer students:

Table 3.2
Acceptance and enrollment rates for transfer applicants, 1990-96

Transfer School	Applied	Admitted		Enrolled	
College of William and Mary	9	3	33.3%	1	11.1%
Christopher Newport University	9	8	88.9%	7	77.8%
Clinch Valley College*	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(5)	n.a.
George Mason University*	88	63	71.6%	38	43.2%
James Madison University*	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(46)	n.a.
Mary Washington College*	167	125	74.9%	108	64.7%
Old Dominion University	119	111	93.3%	75	63.0%
Radford University	44	38	86.4%	24	54.5%
Virginia Commonwealth University	165	134	81.2%	103	62.4%
Virginia Tech (VPISU)	93	42	45.2%	40	43.0%
All transfer applicants	694	524	75.5%	396	57.1%

**Note*: Clinch Valley College and James Madison University did not provide data on non-enrollees; their enrollees are listed here for informational purposes only, and are not included in the overall admission rate. Mary Washington College did not provide individually-identifiable data for non-enrollees, but did provide numbers of non-enrollees for 1993-96; only those years are used in this table. George Mason University provided data only for 1991-94.

The table indicates that 76% of the Germanna students who applied for transfer admission at the senior colleges during this period were accepted, although only 57% actually enrolled. The GCC applicants were especially successful in gaining admission to Old Dominion and Radford Universities, with a lower rate of acceptance at Virginia Tech. However, it is important to recall that a significant number of the applicants had not completed degrees at Germanna. Table 3.3 shows the variation in admission rates between graduates and non-graduates.

Table 3.3
Transfer admission and enrollment, by GCC graduate status

	GCC Graduates						GCC Non-Graduates					
Transfer School	**Applied**	**Admitted**		**Enrolled**			**Applied**	**Admitted**		**Enrolled**		
College of William and Mary	5	1	20.0%	0	0.0%		4	2	50.0%	1	25.0%	
Christopher Newport University	2	2	100%	2	100%		7	6	85.7%	5	71.4%	
Clinch Valley College	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(2)	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(3)	n.a.	
George Mason University	38	30	78.9%	18	47.4%		50	33	66.0%	20	40.0%	
James Madison University	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(11)	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(35)	n.a.	
Mary Washington College	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(149)	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(65)	n.a.	
Old Dominion University	36	35	97.2%	22	61.1%		83	76	91.6%	53	63.9%	
Radford University	9	9	100%	4	44.4%		35	29	82.9%	20	57.1%	
Virginia Commonwealth University	51	46	90.2%	33	64.7%		114	89	78.1%	70	61.4%	
Virginia Tech (VPISU)	23	13	56.5%	12	52.2%		70	29	41.4%	28	40.0%	
All transfer applicants	164	136	82.9%	91	55.5%		363	264	72.7%	197	54.3%	

**Note*: This table includes only those cases with complete student-identifiable data for both enrollees and non-enrollees; the figures in parentheses are listed here for informational purposes only, and are not included in the admission rates.

Table 3.3 demonstrates that Germanna graduates did indeed have higher acceptance rates at the senior institutions than did students who did not complete a degree (83% versus 73%). Nearly all of the graduates who applied to VCU, Old Dominion, and Radford were accepted, as were the majority of graduates applying to Virginia Tech. The majority of non-graduates did gain admission to the reporting colleges, although at lower rates than among the graduates. Interestingly, the rates of actual enrollment are virtually identical for graduates and non-graduates.

Table 3.4
Transfer admission and enrollment, by GCC program and graduate status

	GCC Graduates						GCC Non-Graduates					
GCC Program	**Applied**	**Admitted**		**Enrolled**			**Applied**	**Admitted**		**Enrolled**		
Transfer	113	89	78.8%	55	48.7%		171	118	69.0%	86	50.3%	
Occupational	51	47	92.2%	36	70.6%		30	22	73.3%	14	46.7%	
Unclassified	--	--	--	--	--		162	124	76.5%	97	59.9%	
All applicants	164	136	82.9%	91	55.5%		363	264	72.7%	197	54.3%	

**Note*: This table includes data only from the senior colleges which provided student identifiable data for both enrollees and non-enrollees, allowing for a match with GCC enrollment data.

Table 3.4 distinguishes among the transfer applicants according to their program at GCC. As mentioned previously, some 40% of the students who applied for transfer admission were not enrolled in "transfer" programs while at Germanna. This table presents something of a surprise, however, as it indicates that the *non*-transfer applicants were actually accepted at higher rates than those who were enrolled in transfer programs--among both graduates and non-graduates. Strikingly, 92% of the occupational graduates were accepted for admission, compared with 79% of transfer graduates. Among non-graduates the differences were not as great, but the students who were "unclassified" while at Germanna were accepted most frequently of the three categories. Although this result seems counter-intuitive, it is likely the result of a self-selection process: the group of applicants from GCC occupational programs is clearly small, indicating that only a select few have chosen even to apply for further education. The group of "unclassified" students will have included students who completed only one or two classes at Germanna before applying for transfer admission. Further analysis of these data is needed. Service to these students is clearly part of the community college mission, and Germanna will need to examine further the effectiveness of the services it offers to them.

The available data also allow for a limited analysis of admission rates broken down according to the student's race. The analysis is again limited to the colleges which provided student identifiable data, 527 of 851 total records. Among those students, 76% of the White applicants were admitted to senior institutions, compared with 71% of African-American students. The difference is slight, but worthy of further investigation--although the limited number of cases will prevent extensive analysis. Students from other ethnic groups are too few to provide a meaningful comparison of rates.

Academic Standing After Transfer

This segment of the analysis of transfer student success follows those students who actually enroll at a reporting college through their first year of attendance, based on the data supplied by the senior institutions. Two measures of academic standing will be used here: "good standing" status as defined by the various institutions, and actual Grade Point Average (GPA).

The first table in this segment presents simple rates of "good standing" after the first transfer year, for students enrolled at the reporting colleges. Unfortunately, most of the colleges reporting did not supply an actual academic status variable--only one-fourth of the student records supplied contained this information--so the analysis presented here is based on a standard of 2.00 GPA as "good standing" where the actual status was not available.

Table 3.5
Academic status one year after transfer

Transfer School	Enrolled	In Good Standing	
College of William and Mary	1	1	100.0%
Christopher Newport University	7	7	100.0%
Clinch Valley College	5	4	80.0%
George Mason University	38	28	73.7%
James Madison University	46	32	69.6%
Mary Washington College	214	178	83.2%
Old Dominion University	75	56	74.7%
Radford University	24	21	87.5%
Virginia Commonwealth University	103	83	80.6%
Virginia Tech (VPISU)	40	28	70.0%
All transfer students	553	438	79.2%

Overall, 79% of the Germanna transfers maintained satisfactory academic progress in their first year after enrolling at the senior institution. Noticeable variation exists between the colleges, with relatively more students experiencing academic difficulty at James Madison and Virginia Tech. Again, however, these overall figures conceal differences in academic standing between students with different preparation at Germanna. The following table distinguishes between GCC graduates and non-graduates:

Table 3.6
Academic status one year after transfer, by GCC graduate status

Transfer School	GCC Graduates Enrolled	In Good Standing		GCC Non-Graduates Enrolled	In Good Standing	
Coll. of William and Mary	0	0	--	1	1	100.0%
Christopher Newport University	2	2	100.0%	5	5	100.0%
Clinch Valley College	2	1	50.0%	3	3	100.0%
George Mason University	18	13	72.2%	20	15	75.0%
James Madison University	11	10	90.9%	35	22	62.9%
Mary Washington College	149	126	84.6%	65	52	80.0%
Old Dominion University	22	16	72.7%	53	40	75.5%
Radford University	4	3	75.0%	20	18	90.0%
Virginia Commonwealth University	33	30	90.9%	70	53	75.7%
Virginia Tech (VPISU)	12	8	66.7%	28	20	71.4%
All transfer students	253	209	82.6%	300	229	76.3%

Table 3.6 does indicate that a higher percentage of the GCC graduates than non-graduates maintained good standing at their transfer schools--83% versus 76%. The difference is especially noticeable at VCU and James Madison, where the difficulties experienced by relatively large numbers of non-graduate transfers lowered the overall rate considerably. Over 90% of the GCC graduates enrolled at these two institutions were successful in their first year. Some 85% of the graduates at Mary Washington College, the primary destination for students who completed degrees, were also successful. This table indicates possible difficulties for graduates at Virginia Tech, George Mason, and Old Dominion, however.

Table 3.7 - Academic status one year after transfer, by GCC program and graduate status

GCC Program	Enrolled	In Good Standing	
Transfer	325	263	80.9%
Occupational	83	70	84.3%
Unclassified	145	105	72.4%
All transfers	553	438	79.2%

	GCC Graduates			GCC Non-Graduates		
GCC Program	Enrolled	In Good Standing		Enrolled	In Good Standing	
Transfer	190	152	80.0%	135	111	82.2%
Occupational	63	57	90.5%	20	13	65.0%
Unclassified	--	--	--	145	105	72.4%
All transfers	253	209	82.6%	300	229	76.3%

The breakdown by Germanna program in Table 3.7 shows that students from both transfer and occupational programs maintained satisfactory academic progress at similar rates--81% and 84%, respectively. "Unclassified" students were less successful. When divided according to graduation from Germanna, more of the occupational than transfer graduates were in good standing, although rates for both groups are high. Rates of good standing among non-graduates coming from occupational and unclassified programs are lower. A breakdown of students by race and ethnicity is not shown here, as there was no difference between the two major groups in their rate of satisfactory academic standing.

In addition to the simple "good standing" measure of academic status at the transfer institution, the data allows for a comparison of actual GPA between the students' enrollment at Germanna and during the first year at the transfer institutions. From the outset, however, it is important to note that the literature on educational attainment regularly reports decreases in grades during the first year of a transfer student's enrollment--similar to the grade point decreases experienced by students moving from high school to college. This is often the result of a move into an environment which is at once larger and more competitive. Community college transfer students also face the added complications of meeting a new set of very specific academic

requirements, frequently at a point when they are also expected to be pursuing concentrated studies in a declared major. Given this context, it is not surprising that the transfer group average GPA dropped from 3.05 at Germanna to 2.45 in the first transfer year. Table 3.8 provides breakdowns of this variable for further analysis:

Table 3.8
Academic status (GPA) one year after transfer

	GCC Graduates			GCC Non-Graduates		
Transfer School	**GCC GPA**	**Transfer GPA**	**N**	**GCC GPA**	**Transfer GPA**	**N**
College of William and Mary	--	--	0	3.80	2.37	1
Christopher Newport University	2.94	2.78	2	3.14	3.08	5
Clinch Valley College	2.93	2.88	2	3.15	2.99	3
George Mason University	3.11	2.33	18	2.93	2.57	20
James Madison University	3.28	2.65	11	3.30	1.84	35
Mary Washington College	3.21	2.44	149	3.35	2.54	65
Old Dominion University	2.83	2.54	22	2.99	2.51	52
Radford University	2.60	2.13	4	2.69	2.21	20
Virginia Commonwealth University	3.31	3.01	33	3.05	2.39	69
Virginia Tech (VPISU)	3.20	2.46	12	3.21	2.29	28
All transfer students	3.17	2.53	253	3.12	2.39	298

Differences are apparent in this table between graduates and non-graduates, as well as in the experience at the various institutions. For the most part, the graduates fared somewhat better than non-graduates. Graduates enrolled at VCU, for example, experienced a much smaller drop in average GPA than did non-graduates. Both graduates and non-graduates enrolled at Virginia Tech, Mary Washington, and James Madison experienced significant declines in GPA, however.

Breakdowns of students according to their Germanna educational program are not shown in a table. Transfer, occupational, and unclassified students experienced similar drops in GPA in moving to the senior institutions. The differences among graduates and non-graduates by educational preparation parallel the analysis presented above for the "good standing" measure.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of data from senior institutions documents the overall success of Germanna students in gaining admission and completing coursework after leaving GCC. Among graduates of Germanna programs especially, the large majority of students apply successfully for admission and complete their first year after transfer in good standing. The data do indicate repeatedly, however, that an examination of how best to provide transfer-oriented services is in order. Many of the students who seek admission to senior colleges have not completed Germanna degrees, and many were not enrolled in "transfer programs" while attending Germanna. These students may not have received the best possible preparation for transfer, although many of them do move on successfully. While the difficulty of assisting students who do not have clear plans regarding transfer is a continuing problem, this analysis suggests that Germanna should consider additional steps to identify and assist these students. Some of these steps are outlined in the following section.

B. Making Use of Transfer Assessment Data

Previous analyses of transfer student success at Germanna have suffered from incomplete data and a failure to communicate results throughout the College. As noted above, however, the present analysis is part of a re-vitalized and expanded commitment to institutional effectiveness assessment, evaluation, and planning. Although the exact nature of efforts to improve transfer-oriented programs is still under discussion, the following efforts are already underway:

- The Academic Advising Handbook has been thoroughly revised and updated for 1996-97, and distributed to all full-time faculty. The revision was one outcome of a comprehensive review of advising issues by an *ad hoc* group in Spring 1996, along with changes in orientation and registration procedures. As several faculty members participating in the focus group on transfer outcomes noted, advising is the key issue in providing transfer services.
- Faculty members have received training in the computerized Transfer Assistance Program (TAP), and several resources for transfer information have been centralized in the Counseling suite.
- The present analysis includes much more extensive data from Mary Washington College, traditionally the primary transfer destination for Germanna graduates. Several faculty members have noted improved communication with Mary Washington on transfer issues.
- Transfer degree programs have been scheduled for extensive review as part of new academic program review guidelines currently being implemented. A major aspect of the

effort during 1996-97 will be identifying the most effective mechanism for faculty participation in and leadership of these efforts, within the broad framework of institutional effectiveness planning.

- The College is presently developing an application to the federally-funded Student Support Services program, which would focus on providing special services to facilitate transfer to baccalaureate institutions for otherwise underserved groups of students.
- The results of this analysis are being disseminated to all full-time faculty and interested staff, as part of an ongoing series of discussions about improving the educational programs of the College. The focus of these discussions is on teaching, learning, and student success, and represents the integration of assessment results in a manner most relevant to those primary functions.

The present analysis thus represents the beginning of a new dialogue on Germanna's role in providing transfer-oriented education for an increasingly mobile and diverse student population. As several faculty members have observed, the College is now serving more students using fewer resources--but the key to providing better service is to have a better understanding of the students' needs. This analysis represents a strong step in that direction.

C. Problems in Assessing Transfer Student Success

Consistently, the greatest difficulty in assessing the success of Germanna's transfer students has been obtaining data from the senior institutions. For the present analysis, the amount of data available is significantly expanded, and the process of obtaining it has improved. However, the following difficulties remain:

- *Timeliness* - the bulk of the data utilized in this analysis was sent by transfer institutions in the month preceding the present reporting deadline. Some institutions have not yet submitted data for the 1995-96 year, and several schools do not provide the data annually.
- *Format* - several institutions still do not submit data in the format approved by the Virginia Assessment Group. Some utilize different file formats; some include different coding for variables. Although the SAS analysis software provided to the GCC Research and Planning Office by the VCCS is extremely versatile, it is still time-consuming to identify and customize the data input process for several different formats.
- *Completeness* - As noted above, only one-fourth of the data records available for analysis include the academic standing variable--although many institutions ostensibly create a location for the information in the dataset. Further, the three colleges identified above did not provide student-identifiable information on non-enrollees, which creates a serious weakness in the analysis of admission and enrollment rates.
- *Follow-through* - Only one of the senior colleges provided complete information for more than one year following transfer--ironically, with the academic standing variable

missing, and in a non-standard format! As several faculty members have noted, it would be informative to follow students (and their grades) for more than the first year after transfer. This was the original intent of the *Policy on Transfer*, but it is not clear whether this aspect has been de-emphasized in succeeding years.

Despite the continuing difficulties, the availability of RADSS data and expanded data from the senior institutions has made the present analysis significantly more complete than was previously possible. The data will also allow for additional follow-through on some of the issues identified in the text.

D. Exemplary Practices

Although the analysis presented here is much improved, the techniques utilized are not necessarily exemplary. Efforts presently underway do bode well for the future, however.

E. Progress in Assessing Transfer Student Success

Germanna has made significant progress in the assessment of transfer student success since this topic was last reported in 1993 and 1994. The present analysis still leaves some room for expansion, as noted at various points in the narrative above, but provides a strong foundation for work during 1996-97 in improving services to transfer-interested students. The discussion and activities already initiated reflect the institution-wide emphasis on more effective utilization of assessment, evaluation and planning. This process is still in the implementation phase, and will require continued commitment on the part of the faculty, staff, and administration--but it shows great promise for Germanna as we move forward to meet new challenges.

Section IV.
Special Topic:
Developmental Enrollment of High School Graduates

This section presents results of the special analysis requested by the VCCS in the 1996 *Assessment Reporting Guidelines*. The guidelines requested analysis of results from two specific programs in the RADSS library, which tabulate developmental enrollment by high school graduates who enroll in the Fall semester immediately following their graduation: PFNRL03H, which classifies the students according to their high school; and PFNRL03J, which classifies the students according to their educational program at Germanna. The results of the two programs, run for the period 1990-95, are presented here in two tables.

Table 4.1
Developmental enrollment among graduates of Germanna service area public high schools, 1990-95

	Developmental enrollment in . . .									
	None		English		Math		English & Math		Total	
High School	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Brooke Point HS	2	40%	0	0%	2	40%	1	20%	5	100%
Caroline HS	11	79%	1	7%	2	14%	0	0%	14	100%
Chancellor HS	119	45%	15	6%	108	41%	22	8%	264	100%
Courtland HS	71	42%	10	6%	68	40%	20	12%	169	100%
Culpeper County HS	123	48%	10	4%	92	36%	30	12%	255	100%
James Monroe HS	25	42%	2	3%	23	39%	9	15%	59	100%
King George HS	12	35%	2	6%	18	53%	2	6%	34	100%
Madison County HS	22	39%	9	16%	16	29%	9	16%	56	100%
North Stafford HS	20	61%	1	3%	9	27%	3	9%	33	100%
Orange County HS	46	44%	8	8%	32	31%	18	17%	104	100%
Spotsylvania HS	78	47%	12	7%	60	36%	17	10%	167	100%
Stafford Senior HS	96	51%	10	5%	64	34%	17	9%	187	100%
Total	625	46%	80	6%	494	37%	148	11%	1347	100%

NB: This table includes only graduates from the listed high schools who enrolled at Germanna for the first time in the Fall semester immediately following their high school graduation.

Analysis

It should be noted at the outset that this special topic analysis focuses on a group of students who represent less than 10% of the Germanna student population. The issues raised here should be considered in that context.

For ease of interpretation, it is useful to look first at the column in the table labeled "None" This column indicates the students who did *not* enroll in any developmental courses. By subtracting this percentage from 100, we arrive at the proportion who *did* enroll in developmental courses. Two features are immediately apparent in this table:

- The primary finding here is that 54% of students graduating from area public high schools, who enrolled at Germanna immediately after graduation, took developmental courses after enrolling. This is equivalent to the overall proportion among new students, as discussed in Section II.
- The other aspect--and the one with the greatest potential for misinterpretation--is that there are substantial differences between the high schools in the proportion of their graduates enrolling in developmental courses. Among the schools which provide the largest number of graduates, however, these differences are not as pronounced.

The variation between high schools is indicative of the geographic variations across the Germanna service area; from rural, relatively isolated and slower-growing locations to suburban locations in the rapidly growing I-95 "Silicon Crescent" corridor between Washington, D.C. and Richmond. Further analysis of the academic preparation and aspirations of these students will be required to make the best use of the data.

Table 4.2
Developmental enrollment among high school graduates, by Germanna program

	Developmental enrollment in . . .									
	None		English		Math		English & Math		Total	
GCC Program	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Transfer	333	41%	16	2%	373	46%	94	12%	816	100%
Occupational	159	56%	36	13%	54	19%	34	12%	283	100%
Unclassified	265	61%	33	8%	159	36%	52	12%	438	100%
Total	757	46%	85	6%	586	37%	180	11%	1537	100%

NB: This table includes graduates from *all* high schools who enrolled at Germanna for the first time in the Fall semester immediately following their high school graduation.

Analysis

The distinction evident in this table between high school graduates who enrolled in "transfer" programs and those who enrolled in occupational programs belies one of the traditional myths about community college students. It is conventionally held that students enrolling in occupational or "vocational" programs are less academically able. On the contrary, the distinction documented here is that students who have enrolled in those programs are likely much more focused in their educational pursuits. The fact is that the majority of students who enter a community college do not have clear educational (or occupational) goals. The students who are least likely to have prepared for college prior to their entry, are thus more likely to move into one of the more general curriculum areas. Ironically, these curricula--especially General Studies and Liberal Arts--are designated as "transfer" programs, interpreted by many to contain a higher degree of academic difficulty.

Students listed in this table as "unclassified" may very well be the students who have some clear goals for further education, but who for various reasons do not wish to pursue a degree at Germanna. More analysis is required here.

Addressing the Issue

Germanna already has in place a number of initiatives to further collaboration with high schools in its service area:

- The Germanna Tech Prep Consortium, providing specialized services for high school students who might not otherwise consider a postsecondary education.
- Germanna now has a dual enrollment program in place at nearly all of the high schools in its service area. In addition to providing opportunities for high school students to gain early experience with college courses, the dual credit program has initiated a dialogue between high school and college faculty about their respective roles in educating the young adults of our service region.
- Germanna has provided individual follow-up data to high schools on their graduates for many years. In Spring of 1996, at the annual Counselors' Luncheon, each high school was given additional data which tabulated student outcomes across categories. The data included in this special report can be added to the discussion for the coming year.

In sum, Germanna has extensive connections to the high schools in its service region. The question of whether graduates of those high schools should enroll in developmental coursework is only one aspect of the broader issue of placement and developmental education explored in Section II. As noted there, even graduates of high school are not necessarily adequately prepared

for collegiate coursework in all areas. Many of these students make the decision to attend college only late in their high school program. This will remain one of the continuing issues Germanna faces as part of its open-door educational mission. It should not be taken out of context in order to provide evidence for a particular policy position or political program.